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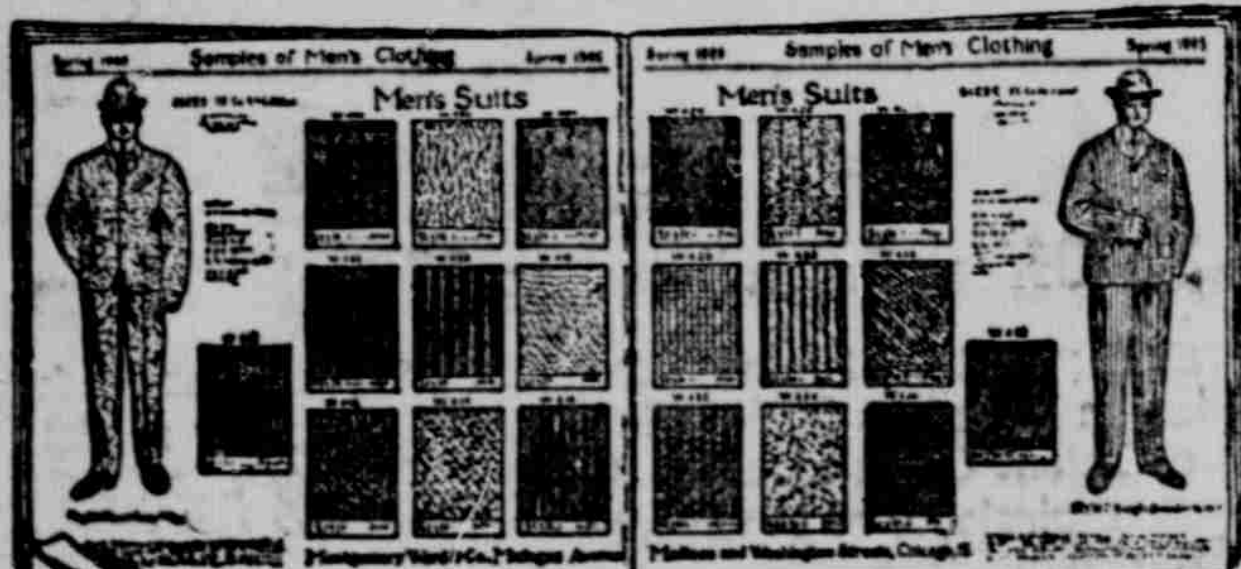
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Prudence and Zabel.

By M. QUAD.

[Copyright, 1923, by T. C. McClure.] Prudence Smith and Zabel Winters met at spelling school and were impressed with each other. Zabel would have married her if the Widow Penrose hadn't mixed in. She wanted the young man for herself, and to save some whispers she informed the information that Prudence Smith was knocked down and would never get up to stand at a wedding. Prudence was at once impressed. The spark of Prudence on the subject of marriage was not far from the surface. She assured her that he had no other over precursors for a wife, and of course she resumed her work with her chin in the air. No explanations, and no further strained for many days. Zabel's mother, Mrs. Snyder, was the matter with him and set right. The widow had had made it up with the girl. Prudence came back again and in a date was set for the wedding. Farmer Smith had had his hand for a while and said: "Zabel, you had your girl, you got the real thing, and you are the happiest man in Washington county."

Zabel was for about two weeks. Then Deacon Gray, who was a widower and wanted Prudence for his own wife, gave up some information about Zabel. When he had sworn her to the most awful secrecy he told her that the young man had a five frog in his stomach and would probably go mad within two years and cut the throat of his wife if he had one. The frog had jumped down Zabel's throat one day when he was drifting from the horse pond, and, though thousands of inducements had been held out to him, nothing could prevail upon him to jump out.

Well, where is the young girl, no matter how her heart tinks with love, who is going to marry a young man with a live and growing frog in his stomach? She can't be found. She wasn't found in this case. Prudence Smith cooled off on Zabel Winters, and he went about with his chin in the air and was too proud to ask for an explanation. It was a year before one came. Then a lightning rod man stayed overnight at Smith's, and after supper he got to talking about frogs. Seeing he was posted on the subject, Prudence made bold to ask him if he had ever heard of a frog taking up inside quarters, and he answered that such a thing was absolutely impossible and beyond belief. Zabel Winters had probably swallowed a small fish and the fish might be growing, but if left alone he could in time be fished for and caught. That settled the frog question, and Zabel was invited to come around and make up. He got a hustle on him, and the turtle doves sang soft and low, a new date was appointed, and Farmer Smith stopped chopping wood long enough to extend a hand and say:

"Zabel you got durned kids, don't you know when you've got a good thing? Don't fool around any more." Zabel didn't want to, but before it had been decided, which minister should marry them old Mrs. Snyder struck his trail. She was too old to marry, but not too old to utter a warning for the benefit of a young man who had put in a day hoeing her garden and refused to take pay for it. She told him right straight out that Prudence Smith snored like a steam engine, that she had six toes on her right foot and only four on her left, that she had had St. Vitus' dance when a baby and that it was sure to come back on her some day. It might not be a year after marriage that Zabel would come up from the cornfield some afternoon and find her dancing all around the dooryard and kicking as high as a fence. That settled Zabel. He wanted Prudence, but he didn't want a dancing dervish. More coldness, more strained relations. It was a full year before old Mrs. Snyder was proved a liar, and it took three months longer to make up and set another date. Things had run smoothly to within a fortnight of the date when a tin peddler came along and bought a sheepskin of Zabel and then told him that Prudence Smith was deaf in the right ear, nearsighted in both eyes and would be tongue tied before she was two years older. Zabel hadn't noticed the deafness or blindness, but he believed in tin peddlers and at once grew frigid. Result, another year lost.

Fate was still in the game, however, and when everybody, including the two principals, had made up their minds that there would be no marriage she came loafing around to do her duty. Farmer Smith and his daughter were in the village one day buying calico and brown sugar when Zabel Winters appeared. He had eggs to sell for hickory shirring. The lovers were brought face to face, but they didn't speak. They thought of frogs and St. Vitus' dance and six toed feet and were turning away when Father Smith reached out one hand for his daughter and the other for Zabel and said:

"Say, are you two got durned idiots?" "Um!" replied Prudence. "Um!" replied Zabel. "If you wasn't you'd come along with me to the preacher and get married and be this turnabout thing settled to once and for good and all." Prudence looked at Zabel. Zabel looked at Prudence. Then they smiled and edged up near each other, and an hour later they were man and wife.

SLIPS OF THE TONGUE.

Even the Dignified English Butler Can Go Astray at Times.

A little story which has just found its way across the Atlantic from an English country house tells of the recent slip made by a new and nervous butler in serving his master, a duke, at the luncheon table. Quiet, respectful and assiduous, he proffered a dish with the insinuating query:

"Cold grace, your grouse?" The slip is so obviously a natural one that doubtless the tale is true. Thus far it is also unchallenged as new, although probably by the time it has made the full round of the press somebody will discover that in its original form it was an Athenian "chestnut" in the days of Socrates.

An anecdote which at least belongs to the same family used to be laughed over in early Victorian drawing rooms.

Among the royalties, great and little, who came to London for the young queen's coronation there was a certain small, dried up, gray haired, bright eyed, brisk little old reigning prince of a tiny principality. He was faraway cousin to an Irish duke, whose estates in Ireland he visited before returning. For his entertainment a village celebration was arranged, with games and dances, and especially Irish jigs and clog dances.

The gay old prince was delighted. He came himself of a race famous for its dancing. He still possessed a good eye, a quick ear and a light foot. That same evening in the great hall of the castle, to the whistling of his host's son, he endeavored to emulate some of the feats he had seen.

The duke's solemn English butler was present, and his horror at such unroyal antics was reflected in his eyes. The prince perceived it and, shooting a sudden forefinger at him, demanded imperiously: "Eh! Tell me, then, what you think of my dancing!"

Discreet and dignified, but flustered inwardly, the butler's manner was perfect, but his tongue betrayed him. He answered:

"Your royal spryness is certainly high." There was a shout of laughter, and the duke, with assumed anger, cried sternly: "What! Do you dare to insinuate that the prince is elevated—that his vivacity is due to any other good spirits than his own?"

Before such an accusation the poor butler's last remnant of composure vanished, and, turning wildly, with clasped hands, from his highness to his grace, he protested earnestly:

"No, I never, sir, your royal grayness; no, I never, sir, your ice!"—YOUTH'S COMPANION.

Caught in the Rain.
"Oh, isn't it jolly?" said Dicky to Dolly.
"I wonder why people complain. If we are together, what matters the weather?"
"I love to be out in the rain!"
"No need of a 'brolly,'" said Dicky to Dolly.
"We're not made of sugar or salt!"



Our clothes can be mended; now, isn't it splendid, With nobody near to find fault?"

"The streets are so sticky," said Dolly to Dicky.
"And see how my hair's out of curl! Please take me to mother!" "Oh, dear!" said her brother.
"Now, isn't that just like a girl!"

Some time ago there lived a gentleman of indolent habits who spent his time visiting among his friends. After wearing out his welcome in his own neighborhood he thought he would visit an old Quaker friend some twenty miles distant. On his arrival he was cordially received by the Quaker, who, thinking the visitor had taken much pains to come so far to see him, treated him with a great deal of attention and politeness for several days. As the visitor showed no signs of leaving, the Quaker became uneasy, but bore it with patience until the eighth day, when he said to him:

"My friend, I am afraid thee will never come again."
"Oh, yes I shall," said the visitor. "I have enjoyed my visit very much and shall certainly come again."
"But," said the Quaker, "if thee will never leave how can thee come again?"—Philadelphia Ledger.

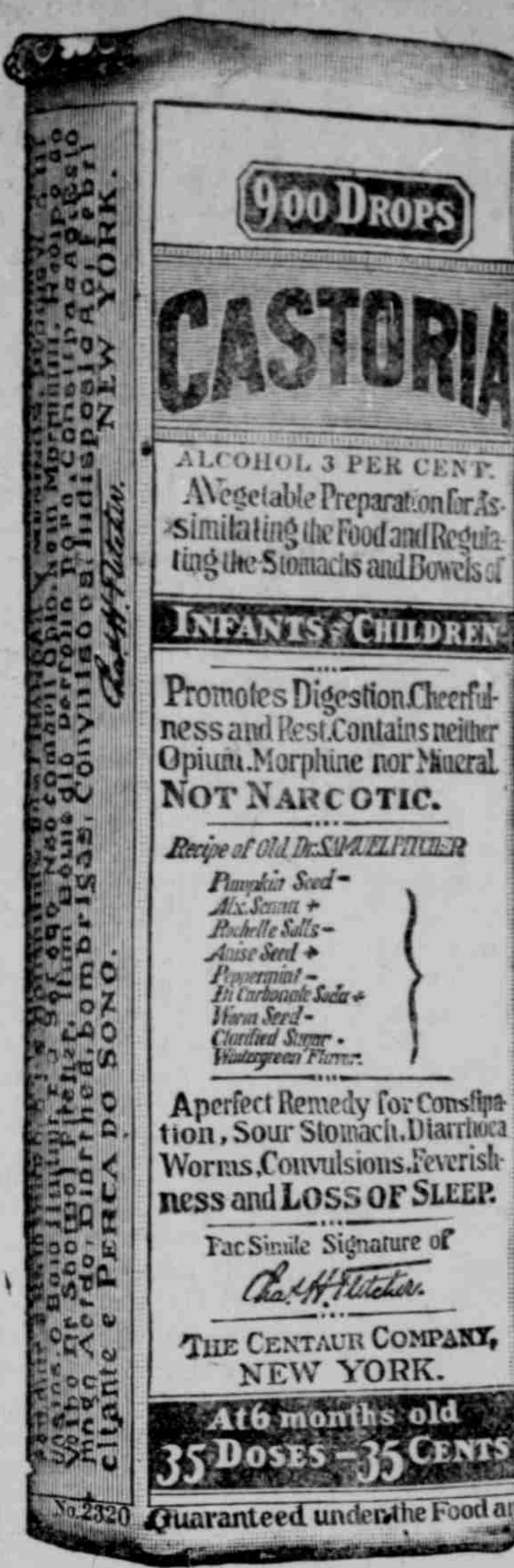
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